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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2017

TAGS: [IZ](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: PRT MAYSAN: OFFICIAL BLAMES SHI'A, NOT AQI, FOR
AMARAH BOMBINGS

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Greg D'Elia for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (S/NF) Summary: On December 18, 2007, PRT staff met with Zaid Khalaf al-Hoshi, Advisor to the Maysan Governor, and three senior provincial agricultural officers at Tallil Air Base to discuss project opportunities. During lunch, one official briefly strayed off-message and informed us that the December 12, 2007 car bombings in al-Amarah had been carried out by locals. This apparently sincere admission contrasted with earlier attribution of the attack to Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), possibly as part of an effort to mask deeper ongoing internal Shi'a militia tensions that could be responsible for the violence. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (S/NF) In two separate private conversations with PRT staff, Mr. Zaid Khalaf al-Hoshi, the Governor's close personal assistant, told us that several of the perpetrators had been apprehended and that they were Sunni AQI operatives from Ramadi. He added that he had bodily felt the explosions, which occurred about 200 meters from the Governor's palace. He also confirmed the reported casualty figures of 27 dead and 150 injured.

[¶3.](#) (S/NF) Later, in the course of an informal lunch, we again offered our condolences for their losses during the bombing and asked if there had been further developments in the identification of the attackers. One of the agricultural experts, Mr. Talib Chassib Lafta of the Maysan Agricultural Administration, volunteered that the bombers were actually Shi'a from Maysan who had been paid to conduct the attack, but that authorities were still unclear of the motive.

[¶4.](#) (S/NF) Comment: If Talib's spontaneous admission is correct, public accusations by government officials of AQI involvement may have been intended to conceal internal Shi'a concerns, including a fragmenting Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) or a resurgent Badr Corps. End Comment.
CROCKER